



## **The Perinatal Association of Kansas (PAK)**

### **The Kansas Perinatal Council: A Real Treasure**

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The state of Kansas has a long history of collaboration between public and private perinatal care providers. In the 1970s, for example, there were only informal networks of perinatal providers. In contrast, a group exists today of dedicated men and women from a multiplicity of health-related backgrounds who have a strong interest and dedication in ensuring the infrastructure exists to continue the effort in improving perinatal outcomes in Kansas. This group is the Kansas Perinatal Council.

Representatives of perinatal health systems in Kansas (including members of the Perinatal Association of Kansas) met in June 2002 to discuss the possibility of forming a statewide perinatal council and agreed that a council could be a significant factor in strengthening perinatal care and outcomes.

The first meeting of the newly formed Kansas Perinatal Council (KPC) was held in January 2003 with follow-up meetings in April and July. The purpose of the KPC is to serve as an expert resource for PAK, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), and other entities in efforts to improve perinatal outcomes; and to study and evaluate perinatal health services and outcomes as they relate to current local, regional, state, and national maternal and child health priorities.

The KPC has as its primary role that of an expert perinatal resource to an array of audiences which include: public and private sector decision-makers, health care insurers, consumers, the business community, other health care providers. The functions of the KPC include:

1. Data recommendations including data gathering, organizing, analyzing, interpreting, and disseminating meaningful data to a variety of audiences.
2. Perinatal services/program/system recommendations including using data and clinical expertise to make service, financing, program, and system recommendations.
3. Perinatal education recommendations including content, methods, identification of target populations, best practices, and partners.

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4. Resource recommendations including identification of resource opportunities available to address perinatal needs.
5. Consultation resource to an array of audiences on a range of perinatal issues.

After exploration and discussion of problems related to perinatal care in Kansas, the following priorities were selected by the council:

1. Identify and assess current perinatal (and perinatal related) data systems.
2. Conduct reviews and/or studies to obtain up-to date information about selected perinatal issues.
3. Increase knowledge of all state/federal maternal child health funding in the State.
4. Review perinatal policy and program guidelines as requested.
5. Promote perinatal care awareness and education campaigns sponsored by partner agencies and organizations.

The Kansas Perinatal Council provides consultation, counseling, and recommendations regarding major issues which greatly impact perinatal outcomes in Kansas. They help to answer questions such as: Should regionalization of perinatal services be reconsidered? Whose perinatal guidelines should be utilized? How can Kansas make the best use of information obtained from certificates? Also, they lend their analytical abilities to a more complete understanding of the annual Perinatal Casualty Report, which is disseminated to hospitals statewide. In addition, they are supportive as well as proactive in ensuring that the Perinatal Casualty Report is handed down from the hospital's administrators to their obstetrical staff.

KPC members include Ginger Breedlove, PhD, CNM, ARNP, FACNM, Director Nurse Midwifery Program, KU School of Nursing; Joseph Kotsch, RN, BSN, MS, Perinatal Consultant, KDHE; John Evans, MD, PAK Past President and GPO President 2002-2003; Doren Fredrickson, MD, PhD, Wichita/Sedgwick County Health Officer; Jimmie Gleason, MD, Retired OB/GYN; Joy Henderson, DO, PAK President 2002-2003; Norman Hess, Regional Program Director, March of Dimes; Debra Tugman, RN, SRS, Medicaid Health Care Policy Section; Stephen Meyers, MD, Pediatrician; Jan Noyes, BSN, ARNP, Public Health Nurse; William Randy Reed, MD, Neonatologist, PAK President; Tom Simpson, MD, Family Physician; PAK Representatives – Liz Gogolski, RN, Libby Rosen, RN, Jane Stueve, RN. The Council Coordinator is Mary Ann Humphries and the Interim Coordinator was Rita Kay Ryan, PhD., Kansas legislature.

As time goes on, the true worth of this unique and industrious group will indeed prove what a great treasure we have in our state. Further, they shine as a model in the provision of expertise to state agencies and other primary stakeholders who provide perinatal health services to the citizens of Kansas. The end result: improved perinatal outcomes for our state and a brighter tomorrow.

For more information, please refer to the Kansas Perinatal Council Web site:  
[www.kspak.org](http://www.kspak.org).